

# Fall Harvest

## GLEANNING

*Catholic Courier* ✻ *Special Supplement* ✻ *October 13, 1994*



File photo

Juan Mya, a migrant worker from Mexico, was one of about 65 workers whom Brockport's Sodoma Farms employed to pick strawberries in July of 1993.

## Food banks adapt 'gleaning' to meet current needs

By Lee Strong  
Senior staff writer

While not stating his position on "Operation Restore Democracy" in Haiti, John Farrer does offer his own spin concerning the United States' ongoing military action.

Farrer, director of the Elmira-based Southern Tier Community Food Bank, noted that the money spent on "half of one day's build up for the Haiti invasion could cover (the federal allocation) for food banks for the whole nation for a year."

The Tier food bank serves 138 emergency food providers, including those located in Steuben, Schuyler, Chemung, Tompkins and Tioga counties in the Rochester diocese.

Farrer added, "We're getting more and more demands on our services, but we're getting less and less help from the government. The food resources are beginning to dwindle."

Indeed, the last year has been especially difficult on suppliers of food for the poor — from the local pantries, cupboards and soup kitchens to the food banks that help to supply them. Several of the pantries have been forced to close for short periods due in part to the lack of food.

And this means that local providers have to be



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Mark Cook of Foodlink sorts various canned goods in the food distribution warehouse located at 56 West Ave., Rochester.

very economical, acknowledged Charles Norton, who, along with his wife, Sue, coordinates the St. Alphonsus Food Cupboard and the Auburn Community Food Co-op.

"The demand has really stepped up this year," Norton said, estimating that his pantry — the second largest in Cayuga County — has seen the number of families it serves each month increase over the past year to between 160 and 180. That rep-

resents an increase of about 10 to 20 families each month.

At the same time, Norton said, "We don't get all the food we used to get from the government, and the donations are down."

Thomas Ferraro, director of Foodlink, a Rochester-based food bank which helps supply 150 food providers in a 10-county area — including Monroe, Wayne, Livingston, Ontario, Yates and Seneca counties in the diocese — noted that during the federal fiscal year from Oct. 1, 1993, to Sept. 30, 1994, \$80 million worth of surplus food was given to emergency food programs through the Emergency Food Assistance Program. The current fiscal year's allocation for the program is only \$25 million of food.

Meanwhile, money set aside for such programs as New York state's Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program has essentially remained the same for

the last four years, Ferraro continued.

Inflation, coupled with the growing number of local food providers coming to the banks for assistance — Foodlink alone has seen the number of such providers it serves grow from 100 to 140 in the last four years — means that money does not go as far.

"We have a pie that has shrunk somewhat," not-

Continued on page 4A